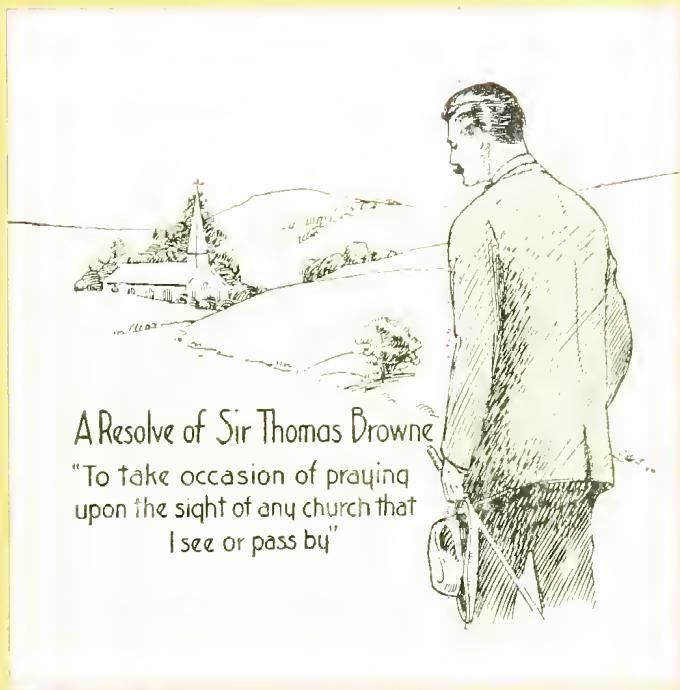
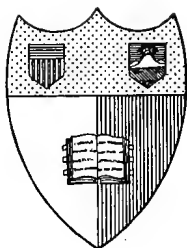


# The Rural Church or, the Community Betterment



A Resolve of Sir Thomas Browne

"To take occasion of praying  
upon the sight of any church that  
I see or pass by"



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**ALFRED C. BARNES**

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THE RURAL CHURCH  
AND  
COMMUNITY BETTERMENT



THE RURAL CHURCH  
AND  
COMMUNITY BETTERMENT

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EDITED BY  
COUNTY WORK DEPARTMENT

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1911  
vY

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THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF YOUNG MEN'S  
CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS

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MINUTES OF THE RURAL CHURCH CONFERENCE HELD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE COUNTY WORK DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS AT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE BUILDING IN NEW YORK CITY, THURSDAY, DECEMBER FIRST, 1910

## THE RURAL CHURCH

*In some great day  
The country church  
Will find its voice  
And it will say:*

“ I stand in the fields  
Where the wide earth yields  
Her bounties of fruit and of grain;  
Where the furrows turn  
Till the plowshares burn  
As they circle again, again;  
Where the workers pray  
With their tools all day  
In sunshine and shadow and rain.

“ And I bid them tell  
Of the crops they sell  
And speak of the work they have done;  
I speed every man  
In his hope and plan  
And follow his day with the sun;  
And grasses and trees,  
The birds and the bees  
I know and I feel every one.

“ And out of it all  
As the seasons fall  
I build my great temple alway;  
I point to the skies  
But my footstone lies  
In commonplace work of the day;  
For I preach the worth  
Of the native earth—  
To love and to work is to pray.”

LIBERTY H. BAILEY.

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## PROGRAM

### Prayer.

Discussion: "The Teaching of Religion in the Country." Led by Warren H. Wilson, Ph. D., superintendent of the Department of Church and Country Life, Presbyterian Board, New York.

1. The best center for teaching the Bible in the country community: Is it within the church or outside of churches?
2. What are the best courses of Bible study for working farmers?
3. Is the present doctrinal training obsolete?
4. Does the philosophy and theology taught in colleges and seminaries unfit men for rural service by its individualism?

By teaching about exceptional instances, miracles, wonders, heroism and saints, instead of teaching obedience to law, average cases, standards of conduct, typical men, practicable, economical and ethical levels?

5. Is the seminary training for rural pastors unsuited by its traditions, viz., a prayer for rain in a region watered by irrigation?
6. Does social efficiency suffer through the teaching of sectarian doctrines?
7. What course of seminary training would fit men for rural service?
8. Should the seminary or the agricultural college train men for service in the country?

Discussion: "Country Church Finances and Administration." Led by Prof. Thomas Cuming Hall, D. D., professor of Christian Ethics, Union Theological Seminary.

1. Has the country minister a living wage?
2. How can a living be secured for him?
3. Why do rural laymen manage so badly?
4. What use can be made in rural social service of modern means of communication and transportation?
5. Is church federation made impossible by invested interests in country church property?
6. Would the endowment of country churches help?

Discussion: "Country Community Building." Led by Prof. Edwin L. Earp, professor of Sociology, Drew Theological Seminary.

1. What religious service is needed for the non-Protestant, non-evangelical and the unchurched?
2. How shall immigrants be socially and politically assimilated, who are now economically employed?
3. Emigrating families: for young men and young women leaving for the city?
4. Through what measures can religious institutions improve the schools?
5. What effective measures can be taken for good roads?

6. Public sanitation.
7. How shall better agriculture be taught in the country community?
8. What teaching as to city life, if any, should be given in country institutions? How far shall city institutions and methods be imitated?
9. How can public libraries be provided in the country community?
10. Can farmers' clubs be organized to promote scientific agriculture?
11. How can public recreation be used to relieve the tedium and loneliness of country life? To improve the morals of the young and of the working people and to eliminate the obscene and the impure from act and thought?
12. How can community leadership be developed in the country?

Discussion: "Coöperation and Integration of Country Community Institutions." Led by President Kenyon L. Butterfield, Massachusetts Agricultural College.

1. Church coöperation, federation, consolidation: Is it necessary? Practicable? Under what circumstances? On what principles? What can the Young Men's Christian Association or the seminary do to aid it?
2. Coöperation of church and Young Men's Christian Associations? Coöperation with the grange? With the public school?

3. Is the Young Men's Christian Association or the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America the agency for federating rural churches and institutions?

Discussion: "The Function of the Country Church." Led by Prof. G. Walter Fiske, junior dean, Oberlin Theological Seminary.

1. What is the church's function or business?
2. Does the crying need of federation throw light on the essential nature of the church?
3. Is the country community better served by a single church or a plurality of churches?
4. In harmony with its function what can the church in the country do to promote physical, intellectual, economic and social welfare?



## LIST OF SPEAKERS

Rev. William H. Allison, Ph. D., dean and professor of Ecclesiastical History, Colgate Theological Seminary.

Rev. W. L. Anderson, author of *The Country Town*.

Rev. R. H. M. Augustine, pastor, Presbyterian Church, Hanover, N. J.

C. A. Barbour, D. D., secretary, International Committee Young Men's Christian Associations.

Kenyon L. Butterfield, LL. D., president, Massachusetts Agricultural College.

Rev. Andrew Campbell, pastor, Orthodox Congregational Church of Christ, Groveland, Mass.

Rev. W. Russell Collins, D. D., professor of Liturgics and Ecclesiastical Polity, Theological Seminary of the Reformed Episcopal Church, Philadelphia.

Dwight C. Drew, State County Work secretary of the Young Men's Christian Associations of Massachusetts.

Edwin L. Earp, Ph. D., professor of Sociology and director of Drew Theological Seminary.

Frederick E. Emrich, D. D., secretary, Massachusetts Home Missionary Society.

Rev. Charles R. Erdman, professor of Practical Theology, Princeton Theological Seminary.

Elmer O. Fippin, professor of Soil Technology, New York State College of Agriculture, Cornell University.

Prof. G. Walter Fiske, junior dean, Oberlin Theological Seminary.

Prof. Owen H. Gates, librarian, Andover Theological Seminary.

Thomas Cuming Hall, D. D., professor of Christian Ethics, Union Theological Seminary.

Hon. Willet M. Hays, assistant secretary, United States Department of Agriculture.

Alvah S. Hobart, D. D., professor, New Testament Interpretation, Crozer Theological Seminary.

Arthur S. Hoyt, D. D., professor, Homiletics and Sociology, Auburn Theological Seminary.

H. B. MacCauley, D. D., secretary Eastern District Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

D. Hunter McAlpin, M. D., chairman, International County Work Committee, Young Men's Christian Associations.

Prof. James McConaughy, Mount Hermon School.

William D. McRae, state county work secretary of Young Men's Christian Associations of N. J.

Rev. Paul Martin, registrar and secretary, Princeton Theological Seminary.

Prof. Alexander R. Merriam, Department of Homiletics and Pastoral Care, Hartford Theological Seminary.

Richard C. Morse, general secretary of the International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations.

Rev. Edward Tallmadge Root, field secretary of the Massachusetts Federation of Churches.

Elias B. Sanford, D. D., corresponding secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

Josiah Strong, D. D., president, American Institute of Social Service.

Prof. Robert W. Veach, dean of Bible Teachers Training School, New York.

Rev. George F. Wells, research secretary, Department of Christian Sociology, Bureau of Field Work, Drew Theological Seminary.

Warren H. Wilson, Ph. D., superintendent of the Department of Church and Country Life of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America.



## INTRODUCTORY

The Country Church Conference was called by the County or Rural Section of the Young Men's Christian Association to secure a consensus of opinion from church leaders and other authorities on country life as to the real function of the church in the country community, its relationship to other organizations and how there can best be established a basis of coöperation between the church and its supplementary agencies.

The program was assembled from the more than two hundred questions submitted by the leading authorities, social, educational, economic and religious, on country life in North America, and even after the most rigid condensation was still so comprehensive as to make it necessary to treat many of the topics in a superficial manner. Several days could have been spent with profit in the discussion of the program, but unfortunately only one day was available.

There were more than one hundred delegates and visitors, including, as will be seen in the list of names published on another page, representatives from nearly all of the

theological schools of the East, agricultural colleges, the Department of Agriculture at Washington, the Bureau of Education, the Federal Council of Churches, the great denominational bodies and the leaders in Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations.

There was a very general agreement that what is most needed in order that the country church shall function properly is, first, a specially trained ministry—a ministry that recognizes in the country church an opportunity for a life service, a ministry so gripped by this opportunity that no appeal of the city church can supersede or equal it; second, a getting together of all the forces for good in the community; and third, the development of native talent in leadership equal to this constructive program by which the country community becomes new without losing the worthy ideals of the old. This is real community building which recognizes the church as the fundamental agency of human welfare, but points out the necessity of a broader outreach of the church in coöperation with supplemental agencies.

## RULES.

A committee consisting of Dr. Warren H. Wilson of the Presbyterian Board, Dr. W. L. Anderson of Amherst, Massachusetts, Prof. Edwin L. Earp of Drew Theological Seminary and Dr. D. H. McAlpin of the International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations prepared rules to govern the discussions as follows:

1. Leader of discussion will be allowed ten minutes for opening remarks.

2. Each subsequent speaker will be allowed five minutes and notified one minute before expiration of time.

3. On rising, the speaker must give name and the name of the institution he represents as well as his official title.

4. No man can speak twice on the same topic without general consent.

These rules were presented to the conference by Dr. Wilson, the first speaker, and unanimously adopted.





## THE MORNING SESSION

Prayer was offered by Rev. R. H. M. Augustine.

D. H. McAlpin, M. D., Chairman of the County Work Department of the International Committee, presided, and after a brief speech of cordial welcome to the delegates, asked Mr. Albert E. Roberts to state the object of the conference.

MR. ROBERTS:

I wish to say that whatever good may come from this conference is due in a very large degree to the work of Dr. McAlpin, Chairman of the County Work Committee, who has manifested a great deal of interest, given a great deal of time, and who more than any one man has made possible this gathering. Along with this has been the splendid co-operation of my associate, Mr. Israel, who has conducted much of the correspondence and has put in a great deal of time and hard work in assembling the program. We also owe thanks to the men who have counseled

with us—Dr. Wilson, Mr. Hill of the New York State work, Dr. Fiske and Dr. Butterfield, Professor Coe of Union Theological Seminary and others who cannot be here. Many have contributed to make this program possible. We are looking for light. We are on a common platform, allies of the church. Because the church is so great a factor in the community, we desire to know where we can best coöperate; how to avoid duplication of effort and eliminate waste; and so with that purpose in mind, and with wholly open minds, as was expressed in the prayer, our desire is to get from the conference those things that will make us more useful in the work to which we have been called.

We realize the limitations of this program. Over two hundred questions were submitted. We have missed many of them, but this is the beginning and not the end. We hope it is the beginning of a series of similar conferences.

The chairman appointed the following delegates to bring in at the close of the afternoon period a résumé of each discussion for the consideration of the conference:

- Topic I. "Coöperation and Integration of Country Community Institutions," Mr. D. C. Drew.
- Topic II. "The Teaching of Religion in the Country," Dr. C. A. Barbour.
- Topic III. "Country Church Finances and Administration," Rev. R. H. M. Augustine.
- Topic IV. "Country Community Building," Prof. Ernest Burnham.
- Topic V. "The Function of the Country Church," Mr. Richard C. Morse.

## THE TEACHING OF RELIGION IN THE COUNTRY

DR. WARREN H. WILSON:

The "Religious Teaching in the Country Community" is a matter of pure pragmatism. In certain states they send out a "seed train" whose business it is to test the fertility of the seed corn. We have come today to do the same thing. We would have aboard our "seed train," which shall test the doctrine in the country churches, a professor of sociology and a professor of economics; a representative of scientific agriculture, a country

doctor and a well-to-do farmer. These would test the doctrinal teaching of the country minister, in a very practical way. Christianity is a good gospel, but for some reason it is not always fertile in the country community. Why not? The seed is planted in the mind by faithful preachers, but people are not induced to follow the gospel. The question is, "Does the gospel, as it is preached, make good, and if not, what is needed that it may make good?" We have to approach, therefore, the fundamental question which President Butterfield precipitates in his statement that the country life movement is a movement for the reconstruction of rural civilization. What gospel and what ministry will serve in this reconstruction?

Let us look at the four institutions which have been the nuclei of rural interests, the store, the school, the church and the family. The rural household is the traditional American family. Everyone of these nuclei of country life is out of repair and in need of reconstruction. The personal character of country people is not out of repair. Nowhere is there a higher individual morality. The

relations of the sexes, in the country, as the investigation of the Rural Life Commission showed, are normal and the ethical standards are high. Rural observers testify to the high standard of individual ethics, according to traditional tests of righteousness, but the social ethics of the country is very low. I have never known milk farmers who had any ethical standard as to the quality of milk. They believe in giving quantity, but only a social standard would give us a better quality of milk. The milk farmer will fight against a higher social standard.

The country store is closed. Sir Horace Plunkett says that the country above all needs better business methods. Very generally the country community has no economic center. The country school is the most retrograde of all educational institutions. The country church merely exists, struggling for survival alone. The rural family is in dissolution. The picture at the World's Fair, "Breaking Home Ties," gave artistic expression to this condition and showed the sore place in country life.

This condition of social dissolution, this

sharp contrast between high individual ethics and low social ethics, describes the need of religious teaching in the country. It should be socially constructive. In the first place, religious teaching in the country should be systematic, but not dogmatic. The system should be thorough, but if possible it should not be sectarian. The aim of religious teaching in the country should be to unify, not to divide. The difference between higher criticism and conservative biblical teaching cannot deliver its values in the country. I have seen a Catholic population take on all the manners of a Quaker population, and yet remain good Catholics. I know the minister of a church covering twenty-four square miles. This church has taught the religion of unity, for no other church has come into its territory in two hundred years. Yet I know another community where, in a radius of four miles, there are twenty-four country churches. Farmers need a unitary center of Christianity and they need it seriously.

The question, "Where shall the Bible be taught?" is to be answered with another question, "What leaders can we secure?" and

"What can the leaders do?" Leaders are few in the country and you must do, in the country community, that for which you have leaders. The Bible should be taught where the leaders available can best teach it. Teach about God, and not about the church. The essential thing is that the church, the Association, and other institutions be forgotten, and that we teach the divine message: the fatherhood of God and the divine power of Jesus Christ. If we do so, the church and the Association will thrive.

As has been suggested, we should not teach, in the country, about miracles or exceptional instances, heroes, saints and wonders so much, but should teach obedience to law, standards of conduct, practicable, economic and ethical levels. The farmer is governed by law, and not by accident, and the rural economy develops regular action rather than impulsive and special action.

Religious teaching in the country centers in the seminary. The need in the seminary is not to discredit the biblical and traditional training, but to add to it the teaching of the science of sociology. We have in the semi-

nary a great body of knowledge, to which must be applied social and economic thinking and a training in social service. We need to supplement the seminary training, not to displace it, but the training in sociology must be scientific, scholarly, and the teacher of this science must be the peer of any other in the seminary.

DR. A. S. HOBART:

I regret any seeming thrust at the life of the individual church. Whatever civilization there is in the country comes from Christian churches, and whatever morality is in the people comes from Christian teaching as given there. It has been given by ministers as taught in seminaries by the curricula as they are. I think we must be careful not to say Christian churches are not good for anything. My observations of moral conditions in the country lead me to different conclusions. I may be in error but my judgment is that in sexual matters the country is worse off than the city. I once supposed the city was very rotten, but since living in cities I think the evil worse in the country.



If you introduce much sociology and economics into our seminaries you must leave the Bible out for lack of time. This movement, if it goes on the lines indicated in this program, strikes at the whole organization of the Christian church. When you leave out of seminaries instruction in the Bible and theology you are taking the foundation out from under the Christian church. So far you have not found anything else to take the place of these. Agriculture won't do it, sociology won't do it. If you don't preach the Bible, the churches won't last. The Bible is the source of all and when you ask the ministers to teach sociology and agriculture and economics you are putting on them a burden which is too heavy.

HON. W. M. HAYS:

This question of the country church is bound up with the entire reorganization of the rural community and the rural community is making itself over and is adopting a new unit of organization. The size of area covered by the new unit is determined by the practicable team-haul to the public school.

Five to eight one-room schools to which the pupils walk are being consolidated into one three- to six-room school to which the pupils are hauled in public wagons. The farmers in the open country during the past sixteen years have made more than one thousand experiments in consolidating rural schools. Not five per cent of the two or three hundred thousand parents who have had experience sending their children, both to the one-room rural school and to the consolidated rural school, would vote to return to the smaller unit. The consolidated rural school has won its way in American country life education.

The farm families are recentered about the consolidated rural school. Once the people in this new school district all become acquainted they will gradually center many of their other country life interests beside the school. Heretofore the farm families have been but poorly centered about the one-room school, about the country church, which is rarely beside the school, and about the country stores, villages and towns.

Under the new plan we shall have the

farm families all so recentered about the consolidated rural school—with its district covering twenty to forty square miles, instead of four to six square miles, as in the past—that a new community life will spring up. The sending of delegates to county and other associations and country life federations will tend to solidify this new consolidated rural school district.

New functions will be assumed. Under my direction investigations have been made concerning these rural schools during the past several years. Those of us who have been concerned with this investigation believe the consolidated rural school district is to generally take the place of the one-room school district. It is succeeding from Florida to New England and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. The new district provides conditions under which the organization of all phases of country life can be effected. Forty thousand of these country life consolidated schools will be required to take the place of the nearly three hundred thousand one-room rural schools.

Nearly every question which has entered

in your discussion today is to be greatly affected by this consolidation. The county Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association, centered at the county seat, can have at least committees at each of the twenty or thirty consolidated rural schools which make up the county system of country life schools. May we not expect that those who grow up associated with this Young Men's Christian Association and Young Women's Christian Association committee work, will eventually want a single union church centered at the same place as the school, so as to serve the same group of people as have become acquainted while together being educated in the public school? We need to make a few simple changes in the ecclesiastical arrangements of the Christian church so that this union may be made easy instead of retarded as it now is.

PROF. ROBERT W. VEACH:

"What are the best courses of Bible study for working farmers?"

This whole question involves the ideal

reconstruction of country life. Any course of biblical study that would uplift the country must furnish that ideal; it must give a vision of what is to be. The vision must be seen in its large historic perspective. If I understand the Bible aright it means precisely that thing, the history of a great social reconstruction, which seeks to develop those higher and finer religious ideals which purify and uplift society. Therefore the Bible course that will best fit this situation is, first of all, one that sees the Bible in its large historic perspective.

Another thought: We believe now that out of social life and out of the interactions of social life all our religious development is bound to take its character. Therefore we must look to the Bible for the basic principles of social reconstruction; that is, we must have a biblical sociology. For instance, I was in the country two years ago talking to a brilliant young minister, and he said, "I want to start a men's Bible class in my church, but I am waiting until the International Sunday School Lessons get out of the Prophets." He failed utterly to see the relation between

the social message of the Prophets and social reconstruction in country life. Instead of sociology crowding out the Bible in the seminary it must spring forth from the Bible if it is going to be vital.

There are two psychological principles that should also determine the best course of Bible study for country life. The first is that the will is the central function in all religious development. Bible study should therefore seek to bring out those great moral principles that grip the will and bring the daily life into conformity to the highest ideals. The Bible is a book that grew up in God's great out-of-doors. The Ten Commandments were delivered in the open air. Jesus drew His illustrations largely from country life, from sky and hill and field. Bible study should therefore seek to make country life conscious of the religious significance of its open-air environment.

Another feature: When Jesus was using that great example of the Parable of the Tares He made one significant statement, "the good seed, these are the sons of the Kingdom." Truth through personality.

The personality of the teacher lies back of the success of every course of Bible study.

PROF. ARTHUR S. HOYT:

I am a country boy myself, born on a farm and raised on a farm. For twenty years I have tried to teach theology. We need, first of all, men who will be systematic teachers of the people. The new scientific agriculture should demand on the part of the pulpit, not spasmodic evangelism, but a well-trained, systematic ministry, who will instruct the people in a scientific way in regard to Bible truths and the truths of life, and can quicken the intellectual life of the people. My own pastor has no less than thirty men who are widely known in commercial enterprises of this country. That is the result of a well-trained man to pass on intellectual and spiritual life to the service of the country. I have no fear of the introduction of sociology in the theological seminary. We need more of it, and not less. We need to cull out the old non-essential courses of our curriculum. We must give the young men the right attitude toward this and then send them out as social

students to social service. Every seminary should have social training for theological students.

DR. WILSON:

Let me say to the theological men present that four of the agricultural colleges will train your ministers this year in postgraduate courses. They are offering summer schools for country ministers. Massachusetts Agricultural College had thirty ministers present last year. President Butterfield is equal to any man in the seminary in his value to the country minister. Michigan, Iowa and Kansas are doing this work well. The seminaries must recognize the need of scholarly training in rural sociology, which these agricultural colleges are satisfying.

What is needed is a training in the scholarly study of religious phenomena. Religion is the product of group life, not of individual life. Long ago the Young Men's Christian Association recognized this principle and acted upon it. It is coming clearly to adopt it in its perfect organization.

In the second place, the religion to be



taught in our day must be that of adaptation to environment. Professor Carver said this summer, speaking to Association men, that the country church has the key to the problem of country life, because the universities have the body of knowledge, but the spirit to use that knowledge must be supplied by the churches. Almost all education has been secularized. We are confronted with secularization of religious education in this action of the agricultural colleges. At the head of the leading agricultural colleges of the Northern and Eastern States are Christian men who are demanding the help of the churches in the spiritual leadership of country people. Their message is heard by the country churches today. In our discussion last year among Presbyterian churches I was able to use many agricultural college and university professors, but practically no professors in theological seminaries. These men in the agricultural colleges are concerned with the struggle of the farmer for survival. This struggle is affecting every situation in the country and every institution. It is for this struggle that the farmer needs religious help.

If the theological seminaries will not give him help, he will get it elsewhere. The problem before this conference is the question which confronts the farmer: "Is the country church worth while?" "What is the function of the country church?"

DR. HUGH B. MACCAULEY:

In my district of thirteen states, from Maine to West Virginia, I have an opportunity to see the condition of things in the country in a way that is very broad. I am concerned with these questions as related to the formation of local federations. In the county seat of one of the most rural counties of one of my states, they told me that there were one hundred drunkards. I am prepared to believe that if there is any place which needs the remedy that Jesus Christ alone can give, that place is the country. What is needed more than anything else is that God's remedy for sin be pressed with power upon all members of the parish in the country districts by the country pastor. I yield to no one in believing that we should emphasize social service, but I also feel that the ques-

tions that pertain to the social service occupy a subordinate position.

Now two things: It is not sectarian to impress upon men that Jesus Christ is Lord and that He is the only Saviour whom God has provided for the sinner. It is not sectarian to claim that the Word of God is the only authority in matters of morals and religion. As we press home upon men the need of Christ, it is then and only then that we are going to get down to the roots of this difficulty which is so fearful. We ought to encourage our country pastors to evangelize the country districts, and work through the school, grange, social service, etc., all splendid arms of the main body, all fingers on the saving hand of the church. Beyond and behind all other means is the paramount duty of the country pastor to press home the need of Christ. We must maintain clearly before all minds and hearts the fact that Jesus Christ is the only hope and the only Saviour from sin, and the only guide.

PROF. CHARLES R. ERDMAN:

As the discussion has drifted toward the

storm center of the theological seminary, and as I have the fortune or misfortune to serve one of these particular institutions, I may venture one or two remarks: First, as to sociology, it should be afforded a place in every theological curriculum and is already being taught in most of our seminaries, but the place must be a subordinate one. Amid the multiplicity of topics to be considered not much special treatment can be given to rural sociology, nor is it so much needed, as the large proportion of theological students come from the country and are familiar with rural conditions and problems.

Secondly, this sociology must be definitely Christian. Some of the questions before us for debate might seem to imply that the belief in miracles or in all which is supernatural, is to be regarded as obsolete. Most of us believe in the supernatural and feel that only a religion which is definitely supernatural and truly Christian can form a true basis for sociology or for ethics. Such doctrines must be taught and are as readily received in the rural districts as in the cities. The supreme work of the church must ever be the teach-

ing of such revealed truth and the cultivation of resulting spiritual life.

PROF. G. WALTER FISKE:

A word on the "sociology" issue. Whatever differences of opinion may be developed in the course of our discussions today, it seems to me we need not split on this proposition, for I do not believe there is any essential difference in our fundamental meaning. No one of the speakers has in any sense proposed sociology as a substitute for the gospel. I think no one has ever claimed that you could save a man by sociology, any more than you can "give a man a bath by brushing his clothes." Social study gives a man a vision and a spirit and a method; but in no sense is it any substitute for the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## COUNTRY CHURCH FINANCES AND ADMINISTRATION

PROF. THOMAS CUMING HALL:

My function is simply to raise the question which must be taken up next. Almost any of the questions might be answered by a

still more fundamental question. If any one asks, "Has the country minister a living wage?" it is easy to ask the still more fundamental question, "Has the country farmer a living wage?" In the long run the wages of a country minister will depend upon justice being done to the farmer. I think almost any thoughtful man in this country must admit that the farmer is bearing an undue burden of taxation, and the country minister suffers with him on this account. And yet this question is but part of a still larger question concerning the distribution of all the products of human toil.

Again, if it is asked, "Why do rural laymen manage so badly?" it is easy to retort, "Why do we all manage so badly?" "Why does the city manage so badly?" "Why does the state manage so badly?" The question is, in fact, very fundamental. Now one difficulty in the financial management of the country church is the lack of proper church federation. And what is the difficulty in the way of church federation? At bottom, I am sorry to say, it is all too often a selfish property interest. We are face to face then with

one of the most serious questions of our own day.

My interest in the financial management of the country church arises out of my part in the endeavor to attain local autonomy in the financial management of the churches under the Home Mission committee of my denomination in the western section of our land. Several of us in early days struggled hard to get state independence on the Home Mission field. This was not because we did not believe that the financial wisdom of the central committee was not properly superior to the financial wisdom of local churches; but because it is more important that a man make his own mistakes, and learn his own lessons from his mistakes, than that he be successfully and wisely guided even by omniscience. It is God's plan to let us make our own mistakes and suffer for them. What the country church needs is autonomy and at the same time wise counsel and guidance so far as that can be given without interfering with its autonomy. Every one of our denominations is in danger of making a mistake in the financing of a country church. And the mis-

take lies in challenging the local autonomy in the endeavor to supply the guidance which undoubtedly young churches need. This challenge is sometimes by centralized government, as in the Roman Catholic and Episcopal and in some instances the Methodist churches, in other cases there is an indirect challenge through societies that control the collection and distribution of benevolent funds. But the evil is mainly done in teaching the country church the fatal lesson of constantly receiving rather than giving. The church should be constantly rather a dispenser than a receiver, I would, therefore, rather prefer relative inefficiency in the financial arrangements of an autonomous church, than high efficiency and churches dependent upon a central organization. Hence, one of the ideals must be to get the country church self-sustaining on however modest a scale; and where this is not possible, to give only such supplementary support as may be absolutely necessary, and to give that support in such a way that the local autonomy will be as little undermined as possible.

I cannot but try to point out that one of



the reasons why the finances of a country church are a difficulty is that our whole system of taxation is making for the extension of our cities and the relative impoverishment of the country. Hence the finances of the country church are but a part of the great question of the uneven distribution of our national wealth, and we have a direct interest not only in a science of a new society, but in a science of a new Christian society. The complete rebuilding of a reconstructed society is a large task, but only when the burdens of life are more evenly distributed will it be possible for the country church to do its work unhampered. A step in this reconstruction is, of course, the federation of country churches. This will have to be made on the basis of some doctrinal compromise; but the most important and most difficult compromises will be the compromises in the community interests, compromises in social arrangements, such compromises as grow out of the struggle to learn how men and women may live together in love that is heavenly, a love of one another because we are the erring children of one Father, Who

has called us to love as men and women and brethren.

REV. EDWARD TALLMADGE ROOT:

There are ministers who are leaving the ministry. In one Massachusetts Congregational Association four men left within the past year. Why do they leave? In the first place they leave because of the small salary. They are unable to educate their children. I know one, however, able to earn far more, who returned to the ministry for a less income. But a deeper reason is that they feel that in spite of all of the sacrifices, they are not working for the Kingdom of God. Several of these ministers who left this Congregational body in Massachusetts did so because while working under such conditions of church competition they felt that they were simply wasting their lives. The only solution is that pointed out by Dr. Hall—the federation of local churches. In Massachusetts we have made an investigation of one hundred smaller towns, classified as one, two, and three-church towns. Among these groups we took ten towns of equal population. They

were selected for this reason simply. Then the statistics of the churches selected were compared. Salaries declined from \$842 in the average one-church town to \$483 in the three-church town. The three-church town received ten times as much home missionary aid as the one-church town. In view of these facts is it not perfectly evident that there is no solution for the country church question as long as we multiply churches in small communities? Is it not ridiculous to attempt to maintain more than one church for a population of one thousand or less?

REV. PAUL MARTIN:

As secretary of a theological seminary and so in touch with students and younger ministers seeking churches and with churches seeking ministers I speak on the country church problem. There was a time ten or twenty years ago when the farmers were generally in hard straits financially, but in large sections of the country this is no longer true. Crops have been large, prices good; mortgages have been paid off; the automobile manufacturers report large sales to farmers.

Not long since I attended a conference of the officers of a country church to which the fifteen men came in one buggy and three automobiles, and the wealthiest man present did not have occasion to use his; but they were not equal to devising liberal things for their church. There is often money enough in the rural church; the further economic development of the resources of the farm may be safely left to the activities of the agricultural department, the agricultural college and like influences. The country people need training in the more liberal and wiser expenditures of their money on the church and its associated work.

A larger church unit is a needed step toward the solution of the country church problem. There are too many churches in our rural communities, in their rivalry each eking out a meager existence and living at a poor dying rate. Dividing a field not too large for one church and minister, they fail to give sufficient support to the several pastors, not merely in salary, but in equipment, workers and congregation to bring out the best in the minister or to make the work

of the church effective. The community does not truly respect the minister who is content to occupy the third or the fourth of what is properly one man's field; and not being able to maintain his own full self-respect in it, he becomes discouraged and restless. Theological students and ministers are not afraid of work or hardship—witness that they can be secured for foreign or city missions far more readily than for rural church work. This is especially true of the stronger men in the seminaries.

A first necessity in the solution of the rural church problem is the amalgamation of the little rival churches of the village or neighboring hamlets into one church large enough and strong enough to give permanent scope for a strong, well-trained ministry; with vitality enough to maintain itself with dignity, and with energy to spare for aggressive Christian service to the community, for the evangelization of the stranger within the gates and for participation in the great work of the church for the evangelization of the world.

REV. WILBERT L. ANDERSON :

Just a word from the point of view of the agricultural colleges that have taken the lead in making some suggestions in regard to church work and ministerial training. Now it is not any thought of the agricultural college that the college should supersede the seminary in the teaching of the great truths of the Christian religion, but it is the thought of the agricultural college that there is a great new movement coming on in country life, and that persons who are interested in that great new development call to the country church for help.

As I conceive it we are coming to a crisis in this matter, a crisis not so much for rural prosperity as for the Christian church. When the Christian church responds to these calls and provides the leadership that is demanded, then it makes good its opportunity for generations to come. If you limit the teaching by the pastors in the country church to religious doctrines, however true they may be conceived in the older spirit, sympathy for the life of the people may limit your financial support of the church to a small portion of

the population. Just at this point this topic matches on with the one that went before. What is wanted is that the country minister should be sympathetic with this new movement of country life, that he should understand and appreciate it. As a trained theologian, he will face the truth as other theologians do. We still are loyal to the truth and not altogether pragmatists. The demand is that the country minister shall understand rural life, and when he does that sympathetically, he will gather to the church new support. If the country church will respond to this cause and give its vital message to the people, there will gather to the church the support due. The country minister is perhaps the only one in command of the forces that can solve these problems. What shall bring them together? The gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of love, the gospel, if you please, of love even to the extent of the atoning cross,—that is the necessary solvent of the irritation and antagonism that prevent the social development of our rural communities. What we want is that the church shall understand that gospel of love. We

want the country church to furnish ideals to the community. Making these adjustments, the community church can be supported in nine cases in ten without outside help.

## COUNTRY COMMUNITY BUILDING

PROF. EDWIN L. EARP:

The general topic is "Country Community Building." I will attempt in a general way to speak on the subject of community building as related to the church. I think we all feel that one of the hardest fields in the church work today is the rural church community. The hardest missionary fields today are the lost home fields, and the country church represents one of those fields. I think that as one goes back to his home community where there once thrived under his denomination a country church and sees the building now dilapidated and very little work going on, he feels that the country church problem for him is a *vital* one. I can give the reasons why we have not a successful church community life in my own state, and in my own country district. I think that as I have fol-



lowed it since I left school and gone back on vacations, the real reason why we have not a successful country church is not that we have not as many people there as formerly, but that while the character of the population has changed somewhat, yet the character of the methods of meeting the religious and social needs of the community have changed very little. Furthermore, the men who are sent to man these churches (I speak for my own denomination) are, because of their training, often unfit for the mastery of the problems of the country districts. In a conference the other day, following the discussion of a paper, I related this: a farmer told me they had a minister in his neighborhood who hadn't get-up enough in him to eat the fried chicken they offered him.

I think one of the most essential things in the whole problem of the country church is to have clearly in mind a program for community work that will be put into the course of training for the men who are to be sent into the country. I hope the time will come when we will make an appeal direct, and make provision in our theological semina-

ries; an appeal that will move men to invest their lives in the work of the country community as they are moved now to invest their lives in the foreign field, or in the so-called slum districts of our cities, or to man the bigger churches in every community. To do this we have got to put the emphasis on a new kind of minister, which I like to call the religious-social-engineer, for if there is any place where we need a community of interests, it is in the country where the financial support has not yet been put upon a paying basis. It seems to me that the first essential is to have a community plan and to have the call of a man who is willing to make a sacrifice, even like Paul, be a "tent-maker" at his own expense, until he can build up a constituency in the country districts that will support his movements in ministering to that community in every phase of its economic, social and religious life.

It is not so hard to get money in a country community as it may seem, because the country is not so poor as it may appear. I was in the West this summer, and was given more automobile rides in the central part of Kan-

sas by farmers than I have ever had around my home section, inhabited by millionaires. I see no difficulty if I were to re-enter the pastorate (and I may do it) in succeeding in a community like that, for I think it would be an easy thing for one to get those splendid farmers to rally to him and help minister to the life of the whole county. It should be our aim, however, to get some central organization that would minister to the whole county's needs. It would be harder in states like New York and New Jersey to do this because of the character of the roads. One of the questions we have to consider in the country is how to secure better roads. It seems to me that we must have first of all a man who is educated for the community life of church work. I made this suggestion in a question that I offered in response to the correspondence sent out previous to this conference, and it was, "Shall the community social center substitute the old circuit system?"

In one of the counties of my own state I once served six appointments of a circuit that had twelve. Six of those appointments,

scattered in out-of-the-way places, were then thinking how they could build a church out on the main road as a central church to the whole community. The people should be educated to make the church, itself, the center of activity, and I think the farmers could be made willing to give up their property interests and prejudices for the establishment of a central building that would correspond to what the Young Men's Christian Association is in some of the counties of New York State; from this central bureau all points could be served and a man big enough to understand his job could be put in charge for a lifetime. Another point is the interest that the farmer himself and the farmer's wife and his children would have in such a center, where they can feel they are somebody, rather than be off in a small community by themselves.

MR. HAYS:

There is a constant discussion of church federation and of church union and of organizing around centers. Those of us who have been especially working with the consolidated

rural school, believing that that center is practically coming, expect the country church to be placed at the same center, both as a matter of economy and as a matter of efficiently serving the recentered rural community. The people of this larger district will all know each other. When you have a large community thus organized into various associations, each with power to send delegates to county meetings, county associations, and able to pay the expenses of these delegates, effective county organizations and co-operation will be secured. The county country life federation, for example, will be practicable. Each local or consolidated rural district association, as the dairy association, the horticultural association, the women's club and the poultry keepers' club, will be able to send a delegate to the county federation. These different local organizations will doubtless also in many cases have county associations, as county dairy associations, county women's clubs, etc. These county organizations will also naturally be represented by delegates to the county country life federation, where all the consolidated rural

school district associations and the county country life organizations can send delegates.

We need simple systems of country life organization and of church organization. The Young Men's Christian Association with its center at the county seat is building up an effective scheme of coöperative work and promises to become a great power in many counties. It is suggested that around some similar plan of organization the country church can be so organized that it will thrive. It may be that the Young Men's Christian Association will be able to help federate all churches in the county, or at least to have a representative federation based on all the churches in the county, with which federation local country union churches may have their primal ecclesiastical connection. Some such scheme can doubtless be worked out so that we may have in the country union churches which may have a church relation to all the people in the rural community. Our present system of church organization makes church union very awkward and too often temporary. If the denominational state and federal bodies would deal fairly with the rural com-

munity let them federate their rural church denominational interests. Possibly this can be done through some sort of a county denominational federation which will serve as an ecclesiastical holding company, to borrow a phrase from the business world.

DR. HOBART:

I have no hostility to sociological teaching in seminaries provided it is based on the New Testament. I teach it myself. Our conference today is in reference to country churches. I doubt very much whether we shall make any progress if we say any outside organization is competent to make them do their work right. Our inquiry is, what, as country churches, can they do on the basis of their constitution and in line with their work? What religious service is needed? First, the New Testament teaches us that our Saviour prayed that we may all be one. We all feel that it is wrong to be divided. We should inquire earnestly whether the differences are vital; whether they are such that we cannot maintain the Sabbath together or lie down together in the cemetery. I belong to one of

those narrow churches, supposed by some of you to be the most narrow of all denominations, the Baptist. I have been active for several years in this business. The last five years I have been hard at work helping to get Baptists and Free Baptists together. We have succeeded in the formal work. It will be a good while before all will get together in some places, but it is decreed and will come. No new "Free" Baptist churches will be formed, nor any "regular" ones, but all are Baptists. I did not have anything to do with creating the spirit of union. It existed. I was simply the channel through which the great movement acted, all I had to do was to adjust matters so that they ran smoothly.

There is a great deal of wisdom in the way these questions are stated. We cannot get rid of federation and ultimate consolidation. If you believe in these things you must consolidate. But, of course, we meet difficulties. How shall we overcome them? There are financial difficulties. I was pastor of a church that had a building costing \$160,000. The articles of faith were incorporated in the deeds. We will get to-



gether, not by denying the other fellow his right, but by saying, "Let us have a platform broad enough and high enough for all to stand on without any man giving up his convictions." We can never confederate well until we stand on a common platform.

DR. E. B. SANFORD:

There is a man in this audience who has achieved remarkable results in federating the Christian forces of a rural community. Four or five years ago Mr. Wells graduated from Drew Seminary. He began work up in Vermont in a mountain town where conditions were discouraging. He found there three churches not one of them able to support a pastor and all asking for outside aid. With rare wisdom and tact he secured the interest of the members of these churches in considering the advisability of uniting their forces. Articles were drawn up and agreements were made by which they came together. By unanimous decision inasmuch as the Baptist church was the largest in resources and membership, the others came and gathered around it, under a simple but effec-

tive plan of affiliation, and today that church is in a real sense a prosperous community church in the town of Lincoln. What has been done there can be done elsewhere.

REV. EDWARD TALLMADGE ROOT:

An example of the need of community building. In the rural half of Rhode Island, in a strip twelve miles wide next to the Connecticut line, it was estimated a few years ago that out of fifty-nine church buildings, only nine had resident pastors. What is the secret of the decline of that region? One reason is that the Rhode Island towns were laid out in big rectangles without any church center—mere political divisions. The church ideally ought to be the center of a community. The churches of Western Rhode Island are small and often only one or two miles apart. Denominationalism has failed to meet the situation. Only by coöperation can the denominations meet the need of community building.

## NOON RECESS

After adjournment of the morning session the delegates became very much interested in an exhibit which the International County Work Department had displayed. There was a Country Life book shelf, which included the latest books on various phases of country life; then there was a prolific display of the agricultural press covering the entire country; there were a number of charts showing the rural aspects of various states and the possibilities of organizing rural life as it is being pursued by the Young Men's Christian Association. Photographs of rural play picnics and athletics; printed matter from the departments at Washington; census department reports and extension bulletins from the various agricultural colleges helped to make this exhibit most illuminating. There was a conference photograph taken on the roof of the building, after which the delegates joined in an informal but most profitable noontime luncheon at the Park Avenue Hotel with Dr. McAlpin as their host. The very informality

of it did much to acquaint the delegates one with the other.

## AFTERNOON SESSION

Prof. James McConaughy offered prayer.

## COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION OF COMMUNITY INSTITU- TIONS

DR. KENYON L. BUTTERFIELD:

Two problems are suggested by this topic, "Coöperation and Integration of Country Community Institutions." The first problem is that of the integration of the church. I suppose that theoretically this ought not to be a problem; the church ought to present a united front. But practically, of course, this unity is a crying need of most rural communities. I know of no better statement of this problem than that made by Mr. Root of the Massachusetts and Rhode Island Federations of Churches—"consolidation somewhere, coöperation everywhere." In this matter of "coöperation everywhere," which probably for the next generation will be the

more important of these two phases of church integration (because the consolidation of churches is bound to move rather slowly when we look at the country as a whole), we must call both for a pretty definite program of country church work, and a pretty definite program of coöperation among churches. The time has arrived when some church body, or some conference made up of representatives of church bodies, ought to make a careful study of the needs and conditions in our average rural communities in America, for the purpose of outlining in a general way, a practical plan of coöperation among country churches. Our country church work awaits just that sort of program. There are plenty of men who are coming to see this need. There are many who see the need who do not quite know what to do. Let me say, too, that we need a new spirit in many communities—a real *spirit* of coöperation.

The second problem of integration is the problem of bringing together into a coöperative work the various institutions and forces of the community. Now for this three things are necessary. First, we ought to have a

definition, that may be fairly well accepted by workers in country communities whether in the church or out of it, of the prime function of each one of the institutions of community life. This function ought to be defined in terms of the community life.

We have heard a great deal of discussion in the past ten years about the *social* function of the school. Yet we are, I think, still lacking a sufficient definition of the function of the rural school expressed in terms of the *community* aim, and expressed in such a way that there may easily follow a *program* for that school expressing the community function. With other social institutions like the church it is the same, even including the family. We are in great need in this country of an institution or institutions which have for their definite objective the study of the conditions and problems of farm home life, not merely the matter of home management, or home keeping, but the fundamental relationships of the family to the development of a better community life in our rural regions.

We will have then, first of all, a definition

of the prime functions of the institutions of the rural community in terms of the community life, aim or spirit. In the second place, we must secure a real federation of the forces of the community. Now there are at least three ways in which this may be brought about. It may be done under the direct leadership of some one institution or organization. The church may do it. The county Young Men's Christian Association may do it. In some communities already the centralized school is doing it. In the State of Washington there is projected an institution called the Country Life School, and one of its main features is to bring together people of the community for all sorts of purposes, and consequently to integrate the institutions of the community in behalf of a general community life. It may be that the rural libraries in some regions, as in some towns in Massachusetts, may be the integrating force. That is one way to bring this about.

A second method is to establish a new organization (we may call it what we please), but it will be an organization definitely for the promotion of the social life of the com-

munity. It will be a civic league, or a community league, an institution made up of individuals who may and very likely will represent the different institutions and agencies and associations of the community, but which is a new organization entirely distinct from anything else, and which attempts to do all its work on a community basis, which sets a community goal, tries to improve community standards, endeavors to develop community spirit, and seeks to give common direction to the efforts of all the institutions of the community.

A third method is to bring together representatives of existing institutions in their representative capacity and to form a sort of committee, or board, or league, or federation, or clearing house, made up of accredited representatives from all of the institutions and agencies of the town or community—whatever the community elements may be.

Now, it seems to me that we may well expect that each one of these three methods of integration of rural social institutions may be utilized. I am partial to the last one because, theoretically, the ideal is not to mul-



tively organizations, but to bring together the organizations that now exist. Moreover, the idea of community life, the definition or function of these different institutions, is simplified and aided by this representative principle, this principle of federation.

Recently a criticism was made of this idea by a foremost social worker in Massachusetts who said that experience had shown that this principle of representative federative organization was not practical in city work. Of course our work in rural districts is yet too new for us to say whether it will succeed. In Massachusetts, however, we have two or three movements based on this principle of a representative committee made up of delegates from all the different social organizations in the community. I think that as a practical matter, however, a great many cases will exist where the church, or some existing organization, will take this leadership and will do the work.

The third suggestion in regard to this matter of integration is to develop a community program and to secure a general community center. We need to preach to our

people in the country the idea of community ideals, community standards and community purposes. We need to supplement the idea of individual responsibility and initiative and success with the idea of community interests and success. Sooner or later we must come to have an institution, a building (it may be the church, or the school, or the town hall, or a special building), but we need something that people can see, a place where they can gather, and where all these ideals of the community and all the forces that make for integration can actually meet in common and there discuss and plan for the common welfare.

DR. WILLIAM H. ALLISON:

In the use of existing agencies we want what from one point of view may be called a new institution, and yet from another point of view is no new institution at all. We are overworking the word "new." We are speaking about a new theology, new Bible, new this, that and the other. Yet may I suggest another new thing, a new church, a new ecclesiology, and I believe we are moving

toward it. I happen to belong to a congregational denomination, a body which is learning a few things through experience and seeing that there is a larger idea of the church that is demanding recognition from us. It seems to me we are drawn together through the various ecclesiastical organizations. We are recognizing that there is such a thing as a local community growth. We are also recognizing that there is the church universal that is not merely an ideal but a reality. Now as we are speaking of the church as a factor in the community, how are we looking upon it? As being merely one of several existing agencies to be placed alongside of the school, grange and so forth? If so, I think we are doing an injustice to the church. There is a larger idea of the church. What I would like to see would be the recognition of a church that is not to be placed merely alongside of other existing institutions in a local community, but a church whose religious power and efficiency and spirit shall transfuse every institution that exists in the community. It is for this larger conception of the church and this conception of the vital relationship be-

tween the local body and the church universal that I would plead.

We have been speaking of individualism and the social law and forces as though they were two separate things; it seems to me that they ought to be fused into one, though we may, for purposes of discussion, separate the one from the other. When we come to the reality they are so united we cannot separate them. And so when we think of the various forces at work in any given community, let us bear in mind that there is a great church whose spirit must transfuse and infuse the whole life of the community.

DR. E. B. SANFORD:

I am in full sympathy with the spirit of this conference, but I desire to say a word with a certain sense of special responsibility as secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. Just a word regarding the third point under discussion, "Is the Young Men's Christian Association or the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America the agency for federating churches and institutions?"

I am thankful that we have lived to see the hour when nearly if not quite two thirds of the evangelical Protestant church life of the United States is constitutionally federated. Three men present in this conference are today giving their services at this time in the care of work directed, and financially supported, by this official council of the churches.

I rejoice in all that the Young Men's Christian Association has accomplished in the interest of Christian unity and coöperation. Let us, however, never lose sight of the fact that the church, of which Christ is the head, cannot delegate to other agencies its special mission of caring for the spiritual need of every community.

I am glad to take part in a conference like this that calls us to consider our mutual responsibility as well as the limitations of our activities. In this presence I do not hesitate to affirm my conviction that the Federal Council officially representing the churches, holding to evangelical and historical Christianity, should be the chief agency in federating the churches and affiliated institutions. I gladly bear testimony to the aid which the

Young Men's Christian Association is giving us in this work, especially in affording the use of its assembly rooms as a place for conference and business meetings. It seems to me that the secretaries of local Associations are in a position to render most effective aid in the work of interchurch federation.

REV. W. RUSSELL COLLINS:

I believe most heartily in the Federal Council and in the Young Men's Christian Association. I am not much in sympathy with the great outcry that is being made for organic church unity. I believe that the church, the Holy Catholic Church, the church of Jesus Christ is one, never will be divided. Christ is not divided and the church is not divided. The church is divided into families which have their own preference as to mode of worship, and these families do sometimes get one into the way of the other in the course of their work, and to prevent that is the subject of our discussion. Illustrations sometimes afford solutions of problems. I was told the other day of a very happy solution of this problem in a little town. In this

town there were three churches, Methodist, Baptist and Congregational, and in the course of time these three once prosperous churches lost a great deal of help and became weak and faulty. Finally, a Congregational minister went to the Congregational church to seek retirement and ease, but found more work than he had expected. A little later on the Baptist church found itself without a pastor, and in the course of time the Methodist church was also without a pastor. Now these three churches came together in the conclusion that the town was not large enough for three large churches, and in the spirit of the Federal Council they came together. They concluded they would adopt the pastor of the Congregational church and use as the house of worship the Baptist church, taking as the parish house the Congregational church, and would sell the property of the Methodist church and turn its funds into general church support. There is a solution of one problem.

Now if that town should go one step further instead of using the Congregational church as a parish house, would adopt the

Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association and give them the social work and secular duties, and leave the church to minister and preach, we would have the ideal state of church community. Organic unity will never come. I doubt if it ever could come otherwise, but federation of the churches in this manner answers, I think, the questions we are trying to solve.

PROF. E. O. FIPPIN:

The question is raised by this conference as to whether the same standards which are applied in city organization are applicable to the country organization of religious work; if the same principles apply, are the same methods to be used? It seems to me that the same principles of religious teaching are applicable in the country and city, but that the methods of operation must be totally different.

One coming from a college of agriculture to a gathering of this sort would not presume to discuss theological phases of the question. I am here because the problem has technical



and business relations different from those which most of us know in the city.

It is perhaps the function of the agricultural college man to call attention to some of these limitations in rural Christian work which must be taken into consideration. We would also direct attention to another fact, which we are inclined to overlook, namely that our point of departure should be the purpose to be attained and not the perpetuation of any institution.

The functions to be performed in country life are two: one of these is economic; it must provide for the physical existence of the individual. He must have the means to live, just as this conference rests fundamentally upon the people who participate having funds to enable them to reach the place and some one providing these quarters.

The first factor which must be solved is a financial one—that of giving to the country man more adequate maintenance.

The economic difficulties are of three sorts, and we as individuals concerned with the rural problem must take these into account in endeavoring to put the rural residents on a

more independent basis. First, they must be able to produce things; second, they must have a market for their produce and means of reaching that market, and third, there must be a reasonable margin of profit from the market price, above cost of production. Until you have these fundamental elements on which the family or the institution rests, you cannot possibly expect to have an efficient church or Young Men's Christian Association. While prices may seem good, it is pretty definitely settled that farming as a business is not as prosperous as it ought to be.

The other function of country life is associative living. People must not only have the physical necessities of life, but they must associate with each other, and they must have certain standards of honesty and outlook. There is an ethical problem, a life problem, a social problem involved. In the country, more than in the city, there is an intimate connection between social and religious affairs, and the purely business affairs. One cannot be carried on independently of the other. One is limited or assisted by the other. The problem of deepening the religious life of the

country, whether in young or old, must be linked with their financial and social betterment. Our system of technical training has been deficient in not providing enough for the associative functions of life, and the development of these latter has been largely controlled by the physical limitations. The farmer no more than the city man can be reached in a missionary spirit—not if he knows it. Any system which reaches him must show its sympathy for his position, and intelligently help him to better his physical life, at the same time that it leads him out along lines of greater spiritual activity. The rural social worker has the opportunity as well as the necessity of coördinating these and must especially recognize the business end of the proposition in its broadest lines.

PROF. EDWIN L. EARP:

The problem of integrating the social institutions of the different rural communities (discussed by Dr. Butterfield) is going to be an educational problem for theological schools and agricultural colleges to deal with, for these institutions have within their halls

of learning those who are to be leaders in community life. As an increasing number of men from the country are going to college, it seems that we ought to recommend that many of our secondary schools, our agricultural colleges and theological schools as well as the universities, should have courses that would embody the ideas that have been brought out in this discussion, as to how we may organize a social center that would be the result of the integration of all these social activities, and yet maintain the integrity of each different institution. I will be glad as one, if somebody in authority will authorize me to do it, to introduce a course in rural sociology in order to train men specifically for this field. We ought to send somebody out into our colleges and universities to call men, or to give them a motive force, to go into this field as a matter of life investment, not as a makeshift to get into a bigger church in the city, but to stay in the country for a lifetime if necessary and make the country church a paying institution.

## THE FUNCTION OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH

PROFESSOR FISKE:

I realize that in so varied a company as this, with every important stripe of theological opinion and social sympathy represented, this subject of the function of the church is a very delicate question! How significant it is, that, in the twentieth century, Christians are still debating the function of the church! We have not yet settled the question as to what is "our Father's business." Some of us here are high churchmen, perhaps, with the high church idea of the church as the custodian of the sacraments, the sole channels of divine grace. Others possibly are very low churchmen, with the notion of the church as merely one sort of social service club. I wish to avoid both extremes and place myself frankly on the *broad church* basis. Let me offer as a working definition of the church, whether in city or country, the primary agency for human welfare.

No amount of unfavorable criticism can refute the fact that the country church is

easily the most essential institution in country life. Criticise it as we may for its inefficiency, it is to the country church that we must look to save the country. Even though it may be usually a struggling institution, inadequately equipped, poorly financed, narrow in its conception of its mission, slow in responding to the progressive spirit of the age, wasting its resources in fruitless competitions and often crude in its theology and ineffective in its leadership—nevertheless it is blessing millions of our people, and remains still the one supreme institution for social and religious betterment. It may be criticised, pitied, ridiculed. It has not yet been displaced.

I think Dr. Anderson is entirely correct when he says, in *The Country Town*: "The community needs nothing so much as a church, to interpret life; to diffuse a common standard of morals; to plead for the common interest; to inculcate unselfishness, neighborliness, coöperation; to uphold ideals and to stand for the supremacy of the spirit. In the depleted town with shattered institutions and broken hopes, in the perplexity of changing times, in the perils of degeneracy, the church

is the vital center which is to be saved at any cost. In the readjustments of the times, the country church has suffered; but if in its sacrifices it has learned to serve the community, it lives and will live."

If I were to condense diagnosis and prescription into a single sentence, I would suggest this: The country church has become decadent where it has ceased to serve its community; and it may find its largest life again in the broadest kind of sacrificial service.

In all life problems the fundamental matter is personality. We have repeatedly discovered, in our discussions today, that our fundamental problem in this whole matter of the country church is the problem of leadership. Given the finest kind of leadership, the problem would solve itself. The difficulty is securing and training the right sort of leaders for the country churches. On the average, they are far from adequate to meet their task today. I suggest that two things must be guaranteed before you can expect the highest leadership in our country ministry. These two items are a united church and a broader scope for the church's influence; that is, a

greater leverage for the country minister, a sufficient opportunity to attract our strongest, finest men. Today such men are avoiding the country parsonages, because they are looking for a real field and do not propose to get pocketed in a hole.

Subquestion three under my main topic is one I am almost ashamed to take your time for, it is so rudimentary. Yet it is essential. "Is the country community better served by a single church or a plurality of churches?" Theological convictions no longer, to any extent, separate the churches. Wealth, social standing, differences in taste and temperament as well as mere habit, account for most local church affiliations today. City conditions may justify this for the present, but in depleted country sections such wasteful splitting up of meager Christian forces is a blunder and a crime.

The argument that churches need the stimulus of competition is very superficial. There is plenty of stimulus in their big task, as soon as they frankly and honestly face it. Anyway, competition is *not* "the life of trade." It is always wasteful, compared with



the economy and profit in consolidation and concentration.

If in union there is *not* strength; and if friction means increased power, then several little churches are better than one.

If church rivalries and quarrels are needed to promote the peace of the community; if three church buildings, unattractive and unpainted, and bristling with mutual hostility, are more impressive in the warfare with evil than one adequate church home, the center of the united faith of a community; if three half-starved, poorly educated ministers, silently pitied by everyone, are more effective than one strong, well-equipped and well-paid community leader, everybody's pastor—then let us have not merely three churches in place of one; let us have as many as the trade will stand! The argument is a *reductio ad absurdum*! It is very evidently false. Blessed is the country community which has but *one* united, self-supporting, self-respecting church.

It is needless, however, to debate such a question; for, whether we like it or not, country church federation and ultimate union

are already in process of evolution. Almost everywhere in rural sections you may observe the process, in its various stages, as surplus churches are uniting in work as well as worship, alternating in the use of buildings or of pastors, yoking with neighboring parishes temporarily, getting closer together every year, until by judicious elimination, by fair-minded arbitration and reciprocity, and ultimately by the grace of God, they awake to discover themselves a united church. Federation of country churches is in the air. You cannot stop it if you try. It is an inevitable evolution which makes for modern efficiency, like the consolidation of banks and the centralization of schools. And when it comes completely, we may expect a higher kind of leadership in the country ministry. We shall also need a broadened scope for that leadership. That is, a broadened conception of the *function of the church* itself.

The mission of the church is to propagate the religion of Jesus and Christianize the world. Its business is to glorify God by following the Christ in the service of men. As the executive agency of the Kingdom of

Heaven, Jesus' great commission to the church (Matt. 28:19) defines its mission; and its charter (the inaugural program of Jesus in Luke 4:18ff.) outlines its business: to minister to the vital necessities of needy men. Broadly speaking, every work for human betterment is "our Father's business." The church is the primary agency for human welfare.

Need I emphasize here that the supreme function of the church is spiritual? It stands in a material world for an unseen God and eternal life. It must furnish spiritual vision, spiritual power, faith, hope, love—those unseen things which endure forever. It must constantly furnish inspiration to tired men and weary women, for the living of their lives. To do this, the church must furnish the opportunity for public worship, in simplicity, sincerity, impressiveness and truth. It must perform the priestly function of mediating between God and men, until in the holy place men feel the hush and peace and power of God's presence and go away refreshed and inspired for life's duties. It must bring the life of God into the lives of

men. It owes the community also a prophetic service, bringing a genuine message from God to human lives, throbbing with divine sympathy for all human needs, courageously challenging the man to whom the vision comes, to live the better life, and offering practical and immediate help, the help of Christ, to live that life. The spiritual service of a vital church will include a vivid portrayal of the Christ, His person, His teachings, His radiant character, His saving power, the dynamic for life which flows from Him, by union with Him, into every life which accepts His comradeship. All this and more.

Yet the church, particularly the country church, seriously errs, which interprets its function as exclusively spiritual. Unless man is pure spirit, the work of the church is more than "saving souls." Soul and body are in this life inseparable and interdependent. A saved man must be redeemed soul and body, in mind and spirit. A religion which aims merely to save a man's soul, and otherwise neglects him, is superficial and fails to appeal to a whole man's manhood. The subtle reactions of life warn us that the soul's environ-

ment must be redeemed, or the soul stands little chance of permanent salvation. Here is the nexus between individual and social redemption; separate them and the Kingdom of Heaven is a remote improbability, unite them and the Kingdom comes. In so intelligent a body as this, the above statement ought to be a mere truism, though it is still challenged by the narrow-minded.

If the church is the primary agency for human welfare, it dare not deny its vital interest in and ultimate responsibility for every serious human need. The church has lost the love and loyalty of men just in proportion to its avoidance of this broad responsibility.

But it must not be hastily inferred that the church must itself attempt to *do* everything. It may discharge its responsibility directly or indirectly. Its broadest service will ever be, as in the past, to furnish the inspiration and dynamic for many secondary agencies for social service and human betterment. But it must *do* the needed work, *or get it done*. It should duplicate no machinery or effort, but should supplement all other local institutions

and perfect their service by its own service of the higher life of the community. It should be the climax of the social, educational, philanthropic, cultural, health-restoring, peace-preserving as well as economic forces of the community; and ideally, it should federate them all, in community leadership. Where these forces are lacking, it should assume these functions if the welfare of the community demands it.

The country church must not simply aim to prepare its members for a future heaven. It must do its part in making its little corner of *this* world a comfortable and respectable place for humanity to grow; that is, it must bring the Kingdom of Heaven *here*.

I believe that the vital function of the country church is not only to minister to all the needs of men, when occasion demands it, but to *lead* in that ministry. Where there is only one church in the place, it may rightly exercise the broadest kind of community leadership. Where there are several, they simply must coöperate, or be self-condemned and forever ridiculed by the ungodly.

The larger vision of the church's mission

will force them out of the petty, jealous attitude of mind which regards every other social institution as in competition with them. The burden of the task of saving the community and making it better in every way, until it becomes a part of the Kingdom of Heaven here and now, will so weigh upon them that they will gladly welcome two things: the most cordial federation, and ultimate union, of all Christian churches in the village; and hearty coöperation with every welfare agency.

If we could agree upon this broad interpretation of the function of the country church, we should have no serious difficulty with the fourth subquestion. If the church is the primary agency for human welfare, and its scope as broad as the vital needs of men, then every country church might well adopt this platform, adapted from the familiar platform of the Open Church League:

“Inasmuch as the Christ came not to be ministered unto but to minister, this church, moved by His spirit of ministering love, seeks to become the center and source of every beneficent and philanthropic effort, and to take a leading part in every movement

which has for its end the alleviation of human sorrow and suffering, the saving of men and the bettering of this township as a part in the great Kingdom of God. Thus we aim to save all men and all of the man, by all just means; abolishing so far as possible the distinction between the religious and the secular, and sanctifying all means to the great end of saving the world for Christ."

In other words, for a specific answer to subquestion four, I should say without any hesitation it would be entirely in harmony with the country church's proper function to undertake to promote any sort of work for the physical, intellectual, economic and social welfare of the country community, which is really needed and is being neglected, and might be done by the church directly or indirectly. But I would emphasize this concise statement of Dr. Anderson: "The institutional expansion of the church is proper only when the social outfit is defective; then the church ought to fill the gaps."

Most churches in the city community need not undertake institutional methods, because of the rich social and philanthropic equipment of its immediate environment. But the



country sections, with their meager social equipment, often with their manifold human needs absolutely unmet, demand the broadest kind of brotherly service on the part of the churches, for the common good. It will put a heavy burden on the church, already staggering in inefficiency. But it is the burden of privilege, and I have faith to believe that the very burden, with its vastly broadened chance for real leadership, will draw strong men to the country pastorate. So long as nothing is allowed the church in the way of local leadership except the cut and dried routine of preaching, Sunday school and prayer meeting, with nothing to vary the monotony but baked bean suppers and funerals—so long we must not expect our most virile college men to enter the country ministry as a life work. Yet we must have a permanently loyal country-ministry for life. Nothing less will solve our problem. With a broadened scope for manly leadership, already possible now in many places, I have faith to believe there is a real chance which will appeal to strong men. Already I am convinced there is a better opportunity for broad leadership in

the ministry of the average *village* church than in the average city church; and many of the least attractive pastorates are in the little one-too-many city churches which make so little impression upon the life of the city wilderness.

In detail, then, as to definite suggestions on the above principle. Let the country church (either the single church in its community or all the churches acting in federation as a close, practical, working unity) assume as its inherent right the leadership in *community building*. Let it coördinate all agencies already working for human welfare and inspire them to greater efficiency. Then let it study thoroughly the local needs, resources and defects, and plan to develop neglected interests. Let it plan first for the physical health and well-being of the people; insure against contagious disease by improving water supply and sewage and setting high standards for pure milk; enlist in the anti-tuberculosis fight with a campaign of intelligence which is often as much needed in the country as in the city; set high physical standards for the boys and young men, and the

girls as well, with simple out-of-door gymnasium equipment, if needed, and competitive games under wholesome leadership, ensuring clean sport. A shower bath connected with the church heating system, as in Lovington, Ill., might be just as efficacious as a baptistry. Closely related to these activities are the girls' club and boys' club plans, which in small churches may well be simply extension work of the Sunday school, without any additional machinery. This is fundamental work, however, and its neglect certainly results in boy waste.

Rural Sunday schools must and will ultimately be developed so as to be comparable with the local day schools, and be recognized as actually educational and vitally helpful. The public schools themselves may easily be vitalized by a strong personality in the country parsonage. I have in mind a vigorous pastor who exerts a splendid influence upon local school ideals by meeting weekly the entire force of school teachers in the township in a club for Bible study and literary interests.

The church may wisely furnish the commu-

nity a high-class lecture and entertainment course during the winter if no other agency does this. Preferably it should not be a money-making course, but simply and obviously a community-serving proposition. If the right sort of leadership can be secured, the country church should undertake a definite program of community teaching in important matters of country economics and sociology, unless in some adequate fashion this is undertaken by the grange or some other secondary agency. The opportunity is infinite for genuine enrichment of local life, for raising new community ideals, developing local pride in local history or prospects, in discovering and developing all unutilized resources, in introducing up-to-date methods of agriculture, adapted to the soil; in arousing a new pride in home-keeping and village-beautifying, in stimulating the loyalty of the young people to their homes, and making the older people more contented. One country pastor has made himself an expert on country life and given illustrated lectures on such topics as, "Corn and Its Culture;" "Insects Injurious to Crops;" "Milk;" "Beef Cattle;"

"Horses;" "Chickens;" "Birds and their Economic Value," etc.

I forbear to multiply details in these suggestions and thus limit the valuable time which should be given to general discussion.

Plenty of objections can readily be brought against this broadening of the usually narrow function of the country church. Some of them are doubtless valid, I will grant. Few country churches have yet either the means or the leadership for such extension plans; and under such circumstances they ought to attempt them very sparingly. Clearly they ought rather to enlist the help of people who can do these things effectively.

Right here, in my judgment, comes the call for the county secretaries of the Young Men's Christian Association. They are experts in rural life, many of them college educated men, and often with theological training as well. They understand boy life and are natural leaders of boys and young men. They know rural sociology and economics and they know "the rural mind." They believe in the country and propose to do their life work in the country; they have

no desire to live in the city. Furthermore, although they are deeply earnest Christian men, they are free from sectarian handicap and in the midst of church rivalries they are free to act as neutrals, as the trusted agents of all the local churches.

Just as the city Associations have rightly relieved many churches of the necessity for doing institutional work, likewise the county secretaries can plan and organize and execute an interdenominational, non-sectarian campaign for righteousness in the whole county, in physical, intellectual and spiritual training for the boys and young men, and in economic uplift and efficiency as well as in broad social betterment. In my judgment the very best leverage upon this important matter of country church federation and union and vital efficiency is the work of the consecrated men in the employ of the county work department of the Young Men's Christian Association. In their tactful, considerate way they can render a vast service to our rural townships and country villages in integrating community resources and uniting

Christian forces in a genuine work of community building.

When in the course of inevitable evolution, and survival of the fittest, country churches are combined and united in a single church in each community, then, without embarrassment, much of this social work can be directly undertaken by the logical and responsible community leader, the community church. At all events, there is nothing to fear, but very much to be gained, in making the church actually *the social center* in every community, so far as leadership and local resources will allow.

REV. GEORGE FREDERICK WELLS:

*The Country Church and the County Work*

The question which I am asked to discuss is the relation between the county department of the Young Men's Christian Association and the country churches of America.

Let us at the outset be reminded that the United States has probably no fewer than

80,000 country churches served by 70,000 or more Christian ministers. These churches are constantly increasing both in numbers and in the strength and breadth of their work. The ministers are the products of the churches themselves; they are inspired by the Christian faith which is the controlling force, not only of Christianity but of modern civilization; they are trained in hundreds of collegiate and post-collegiate institutions both civil and ecclesiastical, and they, with the churches which they serve, form an ever growing agency which is conserving, stimulating and multiplying all of the constructive factors of human society. The modern movement of Christian missions and church extension is the world's foremost exhibition for organized human uplift, and in this mighty propaganda the country churches, in spite of their many failings, stand in the front ranks.

In the second place is the county work of the Young Men's Christian Association. The modern church, in doing so well her service of keeping clear the channels for the growth of the Christian spirit, is producing



year by year an increasing group of young men who in observance of the Christian viewpoint are seeking for American life an enduring rural base and are associating themselves in what we call the county work. The county department is an association of Christian men, the purpose of which is to discover, enlist, train, and use strong leadership in the development of non-urban counties. Their association makes special recognition of the county as the most favorable sociological unit of organization and expert cultivation. At the present time sixty men are employed to give control to this work in almost fifty counties of twenty states and provinces.

The county workers are the sons of the churches. As sons they are more than children or adolescents. Since they have refused to be dependents, learners and followers in every sense in order to be providers, teachers, and leaders, we judge that they have passed their majority. They are men and boys working especially for men and boys. They do not assume the prerogatives of teaching theology or of providing the sacraments. They cannot propagate the

churches as such. Neither can they be classed among the fundamental social institutions. They are the churches working indirectly. The county work is doing nothing that the churches cannot do and in many places are not doing directly. The county work, therefore, must be classed among the voluntary associations which seek to supplement the church, or, where the churches are very deficient, to act as temporary substitutes for them.

PROF. ALEXANDER R. MERRIAM:

One thing to be emphasized is that the matter of personality lies at the very center of the problem. If we can get the men into these churches, the thing will move. I want to add one other word to personality; that is "hope." We have got to enter into this work with hope. There are facts that discourage us and there are facts that encourage us. A great deal is doing as well as being done. Here is a man who has been long in one country parish in Connecticut, with a church doubling in membership. Another man forty years in his parish with a church

membership of one hundred and eighty-five has fifty-one men who can lead in prayer in his prayer meeting. There are things of this kind going on the country over. Let us realize the fact that we have got to have in these communities the right kind of personality and when the time comes for federation, that man can afford to stay in the parish then, and we shall have personality that can solve this problem. Then things will move. Now, remember that things are moving already by personality that has stayed long enough in its field. With momentum in the future, what cannot be done in the churches of Christ?

REV. OWEN H. GATES:

Whenever I think of the country church it is not of the country church in general, it is a particular country church. I find myself closing my eyes to generalities and looking at some particular church which possesses a personality of its own. It is not to be studied in the abstract. And it is not a peculiar type of church. Its problems involve the whole problem of the Kingdom of God.

Our theologies are built many stories high as we build our cities. In them we discuss sin and the social problems of life in many stories, partly above ground and partly below, but we do not get many stations out into the country before this many-story structure comes down, and up, to the ground floor. The sin that had been several basements deep under ground comes to the surface again, and we have to deal, not now with sin and the plan of redemption, but with the sinner to be redeemed and transformed to a saint. It all resolves itself into a question of personality. I cannot think of the country problem as a Problem with a big initial letter. It is a local affair, and a personal affair. As we turn our thoughts to the country and the needs of the country church, we are getting back to the essential needs of the church as a whole, to the very essence of Christianity.

When we are describing the function of the country church we are simply describing the function of the church as such. It is the complex organization of the city which is the departure from the norm. I feel most in-

cited to personal Christian service when I consider the problems and possibilities of such service in connection with the country church.

Moreover, I wish we could get over the idea that this or that unpleasant feature of country life and work constitutes a limitation to the service there. Is the load on the wagon a difficulty that the horse has to reckon with? Is the train of cars the limitation of the locomotive? It is rather its task. Country conditions constitute the task of the church. It must not only try to reach the drunkard by the roadside, but must convert the deacon who stands in the way of progress to an active coöperation in the aggressive work needed. These "hindrances" are a part of our work, and we must renew our courage as we confront them.

With regard to the seminaries, I think our theologies would be clearer and simpler if we could formulate them with our minds upon the simplicity and plainness of country Christians; with this or that person, or group, on our hearts waiting to be fed from the gospel message which is to be brought to them,

if at all, by the students whom we are going to send out to those fields.

The seminaries are considering these questions which are being discussed today. We are earnest and serious here, but if you want earnestness of discussion, and loyalty to the cause of the Master, if you want to understand how men wrestle with these problems through the years, listen to the discussions in our theological seminaries. The problems are not discovered in such conferences as these. We have been studying them, and propose to study them until some solution is reached. When the real, essential need is discovered, you will find the seminaries ready to meet it, even if they have not already anticipated your finding. Certainly we are ready to use all our resources upon these problems, which are so fundamental to the interests of the Christian church.

DR. F. E. EMRICH:

Here is something about the work as it comes to us in Massachusetts. As Congregationalists we have one hundred and sixty-

five home missionary churches. A word for the theological seminaries. Professor Gates is librarian of Andover Seminary. There are over 2000 books at the disposal of every country minister in Massachusetts, to be taken out for four or six months, the newest and best books, and he has but to pay the carriage one way. Last year 2500 books were distributed. The average country minister does some reading and thinking for himself.

The country minister in Massachusetts does something for the library. In the parsonage, in the chapel, in the vestry, we have our branch libraries. We have a public library in every town in Massachusetts. We have four institutions in the old Commonwealth: town meeting, country meeting-house, consolidated school, and public library. In one little town on the Cape, where there are nine little villages, there are nine public libraries to meet the demands of the town. In regard to the church and county work, we are doing something. Here are four towns: Otis, Monterey, Sandisfield and Becket. We would like to put in a young man who can preach, pay him \$1000 a year and parsonage

and have him superintend the county work of the surrounding towns. He would do just what a school superintendent is doing in Massachusetts. He goes once in two weeks to the teacher to help her out. Our worker would take up these towns and help the pastor, giving him expert advice. I think we may do this in time.

The boy in the country is a chief problem. We want a young man who is able to help the pastor to meet the boy problem. How are we to get them together? As has been said, it is ultimately a question of personality. Make the minister everywhere a resourceful man. Give him power to overcome loneliness by love of books. Give him all the knowledge you can. Then he should be the community leader. You are not to judge the church's power in the community by church attendance alone. The pastor must be pastor of every home in the community. Three or four times a year he should go in with a bit of the Word, a bit of prayer and thus make the whole parish feel the influence of the minister. All the work is not done in the church.



MR. RICHARD C. MORSE:

Just a word regarding this matter of personality that has been referred to and its relation to the county work of the Young Men's Christian Association. The relation is a very vital one. The path of the Association into the county work was opened in response to a demand for qualified personality in our work among country young men. In the early decades of our history the permanency of the country Association was a difficult problem. For many years we called it the insoluble problem. But the record of the country Association was fruitful in the story of young men reclaimed. Many personalities of power and efficiency in our work were traced back to the country Association. There was never for a moment doubt in our minds that we had need of the country Association and the country community had need of us, but owing to incessant emigration of its volunteer workers the country Association without a secretary to enlist new workers was liable to great fluctuation. One of our leading supervisory secretaries said years

ago that he had learned to look with resignation upon the death of country Associations. First, because he knew they would rise again; second, because of the fruitage yielded by those Associations though they might temporarily pass away.

When Robert Weidensall conceived of the county secretary he conceived of a personality solution of the problem of the country Association. It was along the pathway of a search for the county secretary and the personality represented by that office that we have been developing the county or rural work of the Association. This work is yet in its very infancy, only fifty counties being as yet organized. In our city work we had the same problem half a century ago. The question then was, Can we get secretaries of qualification for the city Associations?

I was once asked whether the city of Buffalo was a large enough community to call for an Association secretary. But we worked out the solution in the city work on the line of personality and we are now trying to work out the country problem on the same line. It is because with the county as

a unit we can get a man, that we make the county our unit. It seems to be the smallest country or rural unit in which we can get the qualified man.

Now, as to the relation of the country Association to the country church. Of course it is a subordinate relation always if the Young Men's Christian Association is true to itself and its record. The development of efficient personality for the county work dignifies work in the country. The county or rural secretary must rank with the secretary in any other department of the Young Men's Christian Association. He will give that dignity to Association work in the country which is one of the things that the county work stands for. This cannot be happily done without also dignifying the country church and the country pastor. The county work secretary, therefore, cannot and must not be regarded as substituting or rivaling the country church and pastor, but as a reinforcement of both and as helping to bring in the church and pastor that the country needs in order that both may come to their own in the country.

REV. ANDREW CAMPBELL:

I am still in the country church. I am satisfied to be there. A brother suggested an economic basis which he believed to be the fundamental basis. It is an economic question with the country parson. The first question under the third topic is, "Is the country minister getting a living wage?" I think most country ministers are not getting a working wage. There are not many country ministers here for the reason that they cannot afford it. You who come from seminaries or from other institutions have your expenses paid, but we ministers have to do without some things, and perhaps borrow the money. We can live on \$800 or \$1000, but we cannot work on that when we have to put a good percentage of it back into the church to carry on the work. It cost me \$2.50 last month for postage. There is no provision made for that in the country minister's salary. This is where the county work helps out the country church. It comes into the town and it supplies a great lack. It sends a splendid speaker. It comes there with its secretary to help us out along social

and athletic lines, things we ought to be doing. There are places in which the county work and country church are not mutually antagonistic, but where they are coöperative. A great many things have been done in the past year that we could not have done had it not been for the work of the county department of the Association. I am glad to bear this single word of testimony. I am also glad that I borrowed the money to come here, because I shall get something to take back that will be worth to me at least the price of two books for next year.

MR. W. D. McRAE:

I am here today with the four county secretaries, all we have in New Jersey, first of all because we are interested in the upbuilding of the country church of Jesus Christ. We are out for the upbuilding of the country church first, last and all the time. The man who is brought up in a country community, as I was, who never rode on a railroad train until nineteen years of age, is naturally most interested away back there where he was brought up. The thing that helped him

most was the country church, of course. Theoretically we never organize in a town unless the pastors and churches want us to organize. Practically, we organize when pastors oppose. They do not oppose openly. It is the ideal basis as set forth. We would like the coöperation of the churches.

The last three months I have put in a great deal of time, trying to get the churches in a certain town in a certain county of New Jersey to do the work that ought to be done. The county secretary and myself met a group of boys who were asking for Christian leadership from the Christian men of that town. I tried to get Christian men to take hold of the proposition. The boys, from fifteen to seventeen years, met without Christian leadership or supervision. You can imagine the things the boys did. The first men who sat down and met with those boys were the county secretaries of the Young Men's Christian Association. We have been working hard for twelve months. We say we must do this work, and the boys ask us to do it. By the grace of God we are going to do it, if not officially, then unofficially.

## PROFESSOR FISKE:

In closing the discussion I wish to speak of but two things. First, I wish to challenge the idea that there is any real mutual antagonism between the county work men and the country churches. It would be unfortunate to have any such idea go forth from this conference. Sometimes, of course, there is a little suspicion on the part of the country pastors, until they learn more what the county work really is. And sometimes the county work secretaries feel obliged to go ahead with their plans without much church coöperation, but this must not be called antagonism.

I presume I know a majority of the county work men in the eastern section and some in the Middle West, and I can testify to their splendid spirit of earnest consecration and, in general, to their tactfulness. They are not rivaling the church. They are all church men themselves. To be sure, they love the Kingdom of God more than any church; but they are faithful to their church. I met in conference ten nights ago a group of earnest county work men in Ohio, where the work

has the support of the business men and progressive farmers of the entire county. The county work secretary was a member of the ministers' union at the county seat, and secretary of the union. And he surely had a right to be, for the county Association work is simply a specialized form of country ministry. It may be that sometimes there is a little impatience on the part of the Association men with the slowness of the country churches, but there is no real antagonism. Just as our city Associations have learned that they could not consider their work as in competition with the churches, but supplementary to them, likewise I think it is true that the county work has passed through the former stage and is now everywhere anxious to coöperate and help, and not to antagonize.

The other thing I wish to say is this: Representatives of at least fourteen theological seminaries have been called to this conference; on the assumption, I presume, that we are training the country ministers. We are not. We are training the city and the village ministers. The rural ministers are seldom trained at all, particularly in the



West. Doubtless we should not expect a fully trained man to live on a rural church salary at present. There will surely be more hope for the country church when, by closer federation and union, the churches are able to secure and support stronger ministers, men who can afford time and money for an adequate training for their profession. Until then the seminaries can not be held responsible for the shortcomings of the country ministry.

DR. JOSIAH STRONG:

Brethren: I should not have ventured to say a word, for your time is too precious for me to occupy. I have a great fund of ignorance on this subject. You are in direct contact with the problem. I am not. You have first-hand knowledge. I have second-hand knowledge. I have been compelled to miss your discussions, which I greatly regret. I must express my very great gratification in the fact of such a conference. I have been very deeply interested in the country problem for twenty-seven years, and such a conference as this would not have been possible

twenty-seven years ago and many years this side of twenty-seven. It is an exceedingly encouraging fact that such men as are gathered here are discussing intelligently the great problem of the country church. I would like to emphasize my conviction that there is no occasion for discouragement. Is not everything possible in the Kingdom of God? The salvation of the rural district is not to be accomplished without the aid of the rural church. You have touched a great many points that appeal to me very strongly indeed, and if I had been here I should have been exceedingly glad to have participated in their discussion. I will simply call attention to the fact that I have in my hands here an article written by Mr. Wells and also a very valuable bibliography prepared by him which you are welcome to so far as they will go around.

Prof. James McConaughy, head of the department of the English Bible at Mount Hermon School, gave a most helpful talk covering his experience in coöperating with the country churches in the neighborhood of

Mount Hermon, emphasizing the importance of continuous service of a pastor or any other rural leader and of coöperative effort. Professor McConaughy's address had a deep spiritual tone which brought real inspiration into the meeting.



## SUMMARIES OF DISCUSSIONS

The following are the summaries of discussions reported by the several gentlemen appointed for this purpose at the beginning of the conference :

### THE TEACHING OF RELIGION IN THE COUNTRY

*Dr. C. A. Barbour*

The gospel is good seed. It is not always productive seed. Its productiveness is conditioned by the soil. What of the soil for the seed as sown in the rural districts?

Rural civilization is in process of reconstruction. It gathers about four centers—the store, the school, the church, the family. All of these are out of repair.

There is a difference of opinion regarding character and life conditions in country districts, some maintaining that personal morality is at high level while standards of social ethics are low, some contending that the standards of personal morality are by no means ideal.

Certain conclusions find general agreement:

1. The teaching of religion in rural districts must be systematic but not unwisely divisive. Emphasize the great fundamental and universal phases of truth, not the points of difference.

2. Fit leaders are necessary. If they are country born and equally well trained, so much the better. In any case, they must find the intelligent and sympathetic point of view for country work, if they are there to succeed.

3. Greater insistence upon the teaching in our theological schools of a social gospel, founded on the teaching of Jesus and the standards of the New Testament, is eminently desirable. The truest social gospel is based upon revealed religion and has due recognition of the supernatural.

4. The coming of the community rural school may be very influential in the location and the work of the community rural church.

5. The pastor in the rural districts should enter upon a course of systematic teaching and training of his people, ministering not only to the distinctively religious life,

but to the quickening of the intellectual life as well. For the accomplishment of this end the minister himself must be a man of spiritual and intellectual resource.

6. The multiplication of weak and struggling churches in any community is an obstacle and a reproach to the cause of religion. The chief objective of such multiplied churches will inevitably be, or become, the effort for the self-perpetuation of the individual church. There should be coöperation, which will eventually lead to confederation and consolidation wherever the most statesmanlike policy for any community directs.

## COUNTRY CHURCH FINANCES AND ADMINISTRATION

*Rev. R. H. M. Augustine*

1. That the financial support given to the Christian ministry in the country church should at the least be equal to the living wage that obtains among farmers of the community.

2. That as the lack of proper support for the country church is due not so much to in-

ability as to the lack of liberality and as a more generous support financially is not only desirable but necessary, appeals for increased support that would be instructive and statesmanlike should be more frequently made.

3. That local independence and autonomy in finances, in government and in determining local policies be encouraged.

4. That it is vital to the life of all of our country churches that an attempt be made to adapt the work of the church to the need of the community.

5. That the work of the agricultural colleges in supplementing the work of the seminaries in the further equipment of the country ministry be approved and encouraged.

6. That the church and country ministry be looked upon as being in command of the forces and in a position to direct the movement for community betterment.

### COUNTRY COMMUNITY BUILDING

*Prof. Ernest Burnham*

Further progress in country community building calls for a more adequate provision



through institutions founded for such purposes of men selected, specifically trained, and enlisted for life in rural community service. Native talent enriched intelligence, tried sympathies, resolute will; in short, an individually refined and a socially cultured personality—these are the presuppositions of a leadership equal to the constructive program by which the new country community is to emerge out of the old without losing the worthy ideals of the old.

#### COÖPERATION AND INTEGRATION OF COUNTRY COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

*Mr. D. C. Drew*

That some agency is necessary to coördinate rural social institutions.

That a practical demonstration in terms of country life be made in rural communities, resulting in the federation of all the uplift forces in the community.

The federating and unifying power of the Young Men's Christian Association is recognized.

The economic problem and the associative problem are fundamental to all progress in rural uplift.

There must be men in the ministry who are loyal to the country and thus make a distinct profession known as the country ministry.

That a clearer definition of the community be established in terms of country life.

#### SUPPLEMENT BY DR. H. B. MACCAULEY

We call the attention of all the pastors and churches, especially in the country, to the desirability of forming interchurch federations in all the counties as an important means of carrying into effect the program outlined at this conference.

#### THE FUNCTION OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH

*Mr. R. C. Morse*

That capable leadership of the country church is of primary importance. That the church is the fundamental agency of human welfare. That the broadening of the church is necessary to its maximum of service to the

rural community. The county work of the Young Men's Christian Association is supplemental and coöperative in its relation to the country church. Upon the personality in its leadership and upon the efficiency of this personality must depend efficiency in the work of both church and county Associations.

SUPPLEMENT BY DR. T. C. HALL

It is the sense of this conference that this county work of the Young Men's Christian Association seek coöperation with the Council of Church Federation, asking also the authoritative ecclesiastical bodies for their aid and counsel.

SUPPLEMENT BY DR. H. B. MACCAULEY

This conference would welcome some kind of official coöperation between the local Interchurch Federation and the committee of the Young Men's Christian Association county work, and to this end we recommend that this matter be forwarded to the Federal Council and to the International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Association for their mutual consideration.

The following resolution by Dr. H. B. MacCauley was unanimously adopted:

That the thanks of this conference on the country church held at the International Committee Building, New York, December 1, 1910, be tendered to the county work department of the International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations for the holding of this conference and the arrangements of the program, together with their splendid hospitality, all of which things have brought us closer together and closer to the Master.

On the evening of the Conference day the annual dinner of the International Committee was held at the Waldorf-Astoria and a majority of the delegates accepted Dr. McAlpin's invitation to attend. Two of the delegates, Dr. Butterfield and Secretary Hayes, were honorary guests.

## LIST OF DELEGATES

Ernest H. Abbott, *The Outlook*.

E. L. Allen, County secretary of Westchester County, N. Y.

Miss Mary L. Allen, National Board of Young Women's Christian Associations.

Rev. William H. Allison, Ph. D., dean and professor, Ecclesiastical History, Colgate Theological Seminary.

Rev. W. L. Anderson, author of "The Country Town."

Rev. R. H. M. Augustine, pastor, Hanover (N. J.) Presbyterian Church.

Prof. W. B. Bailey, instructor in Sociology, Yale Divinity School.

C. A. Barbour, D. D., secretary, International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations.

Miss Helen F. Barnes, National Board Young Women's Christian Associations.

Wallace Batchelder, member of County Committee of Windsor County, Vt.

W. H. Baxley, county secretary, Westchester County, N. Y.

John R. Boardman, New York.

Miss Elizabeth Boies, National Board of Young Women's Christian Associations.

Dr. Charles H. Boynton, professor of Homiletics and Pedagogy, General Theological Seminary.

H. S. Braucher, Playground Association of America.  
Rev. J. Lee Brooks, pastor, Methodist Episcopal Church, Anderson, N. J.

F. E. Burgess, secretary, International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations.

Prof. Ernest Burnham, director, Western State Normal School, Kalamazoo, Mich.

Kenyon L. Butterfield, LL. D., president, Massachusetts Agricultural College.

Rev. Andrew Campbell, pastor, Orthodox Congregational Church of Christ, Groveland, Mass.

W. J. Campbell, state county work secretary of the Young Men's Christian Associations of Pennsylvania.

Miss Julia F. Capen, general secretary of the Young Women's Christian Association, Lakewood, N. J.

E. C. Carter, secretary, International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations.

Daniel Chase, county secretary, Eastern Delaware County, N. Y.

Rev. S. C. Coale, pastor, Union Church, Littleton, N. J.

Rev. W. Russell Collins, D. D., professor of Liturgics and Ecclesiastical Polity, Theological Seminary of the Reformed Episcopal Church, Philadelphia.

William Knowles Cooper, general secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association, Washington.

Miss Mabel Cratty, National Board of Young Women's Christian Associations.

- Miss Caroline B. Dow, dean of National Training School of Young Women's Christian Associations.
- Dwight C. Drew, state county work secretary of the Young Men's Christian Associations of Massachusetts.
- Edwin L. Earp, Ph. D., professor of Sociology and director of Drew Theological Seminary.
- Dr. Frederick E. Emrich, secretary, Massachusetts Home Missionary Society.
- Rev. Charles R. Erdman, professor of Practical Theology, Princeton Theological Seminary.
- Elmer O. Fippin, professor of Soil Technology, New York State College of Agriculture, Cornell University.
- George J. Fisher, M. D., secretary, International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations.
- Prof. G. Walter Fiske, junior dean, Oberlin Theological Seminary.
- A. W. Fismer, Ph. D., professor Practical Theology, German Theological Seminary.
- Rev. George C. Foley, D. D., Jay Cooke professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Care, Philadelphia Divinity School.
- E. L. Fullam, member, County Committee of Windsor County, Vt.
- C. A. Gammons, county secretary, Western Delaware County, N. Y.
- P. W. Garrett, county secretary, Monmouth County, N. J.

- Prof. Owen H. Gates, librarian, Andover Theological Seminary.
- Rev. F. F. German, St. Thomas' Church, Mamaroneck, N. Y.
- C. C. Gerow, member, County Committee of Orange County, N. Y.
- Rev. C. O. Gill, Hartland, Vt.
- Guy D. Gold, county secretary of Rockland County, N. Y.
- Dr. W. A. Granger, president, New York State Baptist Convention.
- Thomas Cuming Hall, D. D., professor of Christian Ethics, Union Theological Seminary.
- Clarence L. Harding, member, County Subcommittee of the Interstate Committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations of Maryland and Delaware.
- Hon. Willet M. Hays, assistant secretary, United States Department of Agriculture.
- Ernest J. Hewitt, member Windsor County, Vermont County Committee.
- C. J. Hicks, associate general secretary of the International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations.
- Fred M. Hill, state county work secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association of New York.
- Alvah S. Hobart, D. D., professor, New Testament Interpretation, Crozer Theological Seminary.
- Arthur S. Hoyt, D. D., professor, Homiletics and Sociology, Auburn Theological Seminary.



A. C. Hurd, county secretary, Windsor County, Vt.  
Henry Israel, county work secretary, International  
Committee Young Men's Christian Associations.  
Wayne C. Jordan, county secretary, Sullivan  
County, N. H.

Rev. William B. Ladd, Colt professor of Church  
History, Berkeley Divinity School.

H. B. MacCauley, D. D., secretary, Eastern District  
Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in  
America.

Edgar MacNaughten, secretary, International Com-  
mittee of Young Men's Christian Associations.

D. Hunter McAlpin, M. D., chairman, Interna-  
tional County Work Subcommittee.

Prof. James McConaughy, Mount Hermon School.

William D. McRae, state county work secretary  
of Young Men's Christian Associations of N. J.

Prof. A. R. Mann, registrar, New York State Col-  
lege of Agriculture, Cornell University.

Rev. Paul Martin, registrar and secretary, Prince-  
ton Theological Seminary.

H. D. Maydole, county secretary, Camden County,  
N. J.

Prof. Alexander R. Merriam, Department of Homi-  
letics and Pastoral Care, Hartford Theological  
Seminary.

Lyford A. Merrow, chairman, State County Work  
Subcommittee of New Hampshire.

Hon. A. C. Monahan, Department of the Interior,  
Bureau of Education.

- J. Sterling Moran, county secretary, Addison County, Vt.
- F. S. Morrison, interstate secretary of Young Men's Christian Associations of Maryland and Delaware.
- Richard C. Morse, general secretary of the International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations.
- Frank W. Ober, editor *Association Men*.
- Rev. G. Phillips Payson, Katonah, N. Y.
- Thornton B. Penfield, Ph. D., secretary, International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations.
- J. W. Pontius, secretary, International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations.
- Otis B. Read, county secretary, Burlington County, N. J.
- G. A. Reeder, secretary, International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations.
- Albert E. Roberts, county work secretary, International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations.
- Peter Roberts, Ph. D., secretary, International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations.
- E. M. Robinson, secretary, International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations.
- Rev. Edward Tallmadge Root, field secretary of the Massachusetts Federation of Churches.
- Allen M. Ruggles, Columbia University.

Elias B. Sanford, D. D., corresponding secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

Miss Anna Seaburg, secretary, National Board of Young Women's Christian Associations.

F. E. Shapleigh, interstate county secretary of the Young Men's Christian Associations of Maryland and Delaware.

Rev. William Shedden, assistant librarian, Princeton Theological Seminary.

F. B. Shipp, secretary, International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations.

Fred B. Smith, secretary, International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations.

Jefferson C. Smith, state secretary of Maine Young Men's Christian Associations.

C. W. Stetson, county secretary, Greene County, N. Y.

Josiah Strong, D. D., president, American Institute for Social Service.

Ezra S. Tipple, Ph. D., professor of Practical Theology, Drew Theological Seminary.

James F. Turnbull, American Baptist Home Mission Society.

Prof. Robert W. Veach, dean of Bible Teachers Training School, New York.

Rev. George F. Wells, research secretary, Department of Christian Sociology, Bureau of Field Work, Drew Theological Seminary.

James A. Whitmore, secretary, International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations.

Z. L. Wilcox, county secretary, Orange County, N. Y.

Warren H. Wilson, Ph. D., superintendent of the Department of Church and Country Life of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America.

Henry Yeigh, chairman, County Subcommittee of the Provincial Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations of Ontario and Quebec.







